

Message Text

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41

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FM AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3256

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAMAKO 542

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, ML

SUBJ: NEW MALIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE SOVIET UNION

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. MALI'S RULING MILITARY COMMITTEE FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION ON FEBRUARY 9 NAMED BOUBACAR KASSE, FORMER DIRECTOR OF RADIO MALI, AS AMBASSADOR TO THE USSR. BORN IN 1925 AT MOPTI KASSE WAS EDUCATED AT THE ECOLE NORMALE DE WILLIAM PONTY, DAKAR AND TOOK AN ACTIVE PART IN PRE-INDEPENDENCE POLITICS AS A YOUTH LEADER AND TRADE UNIONIST. HIS POSTS SINCE INDEPENDENCE HAVE INCLUDED; SECRETARY TO THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 1960-1962; ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 1962-1965; AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC 1966-1969; AMBASSADOR TO ALGERIA, 1970-1971; DIRECTOR OF RADIO MALI, 1972-1975. IN ADDITION TO HIS MANY TRAVELS AS A DIPLOMAT, KASSE TOURED THE UNITED STATES IN SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1972 ON THE INTERNATIONAL VISITOR PROGRAM.

END UNCLASSIFIED

2. OBSERVERS HAVE DESCRIBED KASSE AS ONE OF MALI'S LESS CAPABLE OFFICIALS, ALBEIT A CHARMING, FRIENDLY PERSON WITH A GOOD SENSE OF HUMOR. IN OCTOBER 1975, CONFIDENTIAL

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THE INCOMING MINISTER OF INFORMATION REMOVED KASSE

FROM HIS POST AS DIRECTOR OF RADIO MALI FOR INCOMPETENCE.
KASSE'S POLITICAL BASE AMONG THE PEULE PEOPLE IS, HOWEVER,
VERY STRONG AND HE OBVIOUSLY HAS GOOD TIES WITH THE RULING
ELITE. GIVEN THE SIZE OF SOVIET ECONOMIC AND MILITARY
ASSISTANCE TO MALI, THE POST OF AMBASSADOR TO THE SOVIET
UNION IS AN IMPORTANT ASSIGNMENT. MALIAN DIPLOMATS,
HOWEVER, ARE NOT EAGER TO GO TO MOSCOW BECAUSE OF THE
EXTREME COLD AND THE RACIST ATTITUDES THEY EXPECT TO
CONFRONT IN THE USSR.
MCGUIRE

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NNN

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